

HISTORIC BARN REHABILITATION STANDARDS

Technical Paper No. 24



King County

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Introduction

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. They are used in the evaluation of King County Landmarks, and when grant funds are part of a project.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation...

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

... and How They Might Impact Historic Barns

1. It's best to continue to use barns for agricultural purposes, but if not, try to find a solution that uses the character of the spaces in the barn. They make great community places, spaces for light construction work, etc.
2. This standard encourages retention of the historic fabric of the building. Don't take down that cupola, remove those milking stanchions, or sell the old siding to a picture frame maker.
3. Don't add new things to barns that appear as if they were part of the historic building. Don't add a silo when there wasn't one, or add new doors that came from an old European barn, or a fancy cupola if the roof was simple without cupolas.
4. Additions built more than 40 years ago or new materials may be considered historic. Metal roofing that replaced wood shingles in the 1940s is probably historic now.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

5. Those hand-hewn timbers and pegged wooden connections are important characteristic of many barns. So are the whitewashed areas that were used for milking.

6. Repair first if possible. This includes windows, doors, structural components, siding, and roofing. If it can't be repaired the replacements need to be the same as the originals... wood windows for wood windows, 6" siding for 6" siding, shingles for shingles. And if you don't know what was there, try to find historic photos or other evidence that indicate what the feature was like.

7. Sandblasting or power washing are not good for wood siding. It raises the grain of the wood and encourages moisture retention. Low pressure wash or hand scraping are the best solutions before repainting.

8. Chances are, working on the building itself won't uncover archaeological resources, but if digging a new foundation and something unusual is uncovered, contact us!

9. It's important to make sure the historic barn is still the main focus. If there is an addition, it should be toward the rear or a less visible side and should clearly look like an addition, not confused as part of the original barn. It shouldn't visually or physically overpower the historic structure but should use materials and be of a style that works with the original.

10. If additions are necessary, they should be designed so that they can be taken down in the future if someone wants to restore the original building. If adding a room, don't remove all the exterior siding, but leave it exposed within the new space.